

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Kindly amend claims 1-5, 7-9 and 11, as shown below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of:

forming a first insulating film on a semiconductor substrate;

forming a first trench ~~portion~~ in said first insulating film;

forming a second insulating film over the entire surface of said semiconductor substrate so as to fill up said first trench ~~portion~~;

forming a plurality of second trenches ~~for wiring~~ in an area excluding a region immediately above said first trench portion by removing said second insulating film selectively;

forming a metal film so as to fill in said second trenches ~~for wiring~~;

forming a plurality of wirings by removing said metal film lying outside said second trenches ~~for wiring~~;

forming a third trench ~~to form an air gap~~ by removing said second insulating film lying above said first trench portion, ~~said trench to form an air gap being composed of a removed portion of~~ and said second insulating film ~~and lying in said trench portion~~; and

forming a third insulating film over the entire surface of said semiconductor substrate so as to form a cavity within said third trench to form an air gap.

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Claim 2 (currently amended): The method according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 1, wherein said step of forming a third trench to form an air gap comprises removing said second insulating film throughout the whole region between said ~~adjacent~~ wirings.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The method according to claim 1 ~~[[;]]~~:

wherein said step of forming a first trench ~~portion~~ comprises forming a ~~plurality of~~ via hole~~[[s]]~~ together with said first trench ~~portion~~, in a region of said first insulating film other than the region where said first trench ~~portion~~ is formed,

said step of forming a plurality of second trenches ~~for wiring~~ comprises connecting said second trenches ~~for wiring~~ to said via holes, and

said step of forming a metal film comprises filling it in said via holes ~~along~~ together with said second trenches ~~for wiring~~.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of forming a third trench ~~to form an air gap~~ comprises removing said second insulating film along the region where said first trench ~~portion~~ is formed.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of forming a third trench ~~to form an air gap~~ comprises removing said second insulating film, by using an etchant capable of removing said insulating film selectively with respect to said metal film without using a mask.

Claim 6 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said third insulating film is made of a low-dielectric-constant material.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of:

forming an insulating film on a semiconductor substrate;

forming a plurality of first trenches for wirings by removing said insulating film selectively;

forming a metal film so as to fill in said first trenches for wirings;

forming a plurality of wirings by removing said metal film lying outside said first trenches for wirings; and

forming a second trench by removing said insulating film throughout the whole region between said ~~adjacent~~ wirings.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method according to claim 7, further comprising a step of forming an interlayer insulating film over the entire surface of said semiconductor substrate after step of forming [[a]] said second trench.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method according to claim 8, wherein said step of forming an interlayer insulating film comprises forming a cavity within said second trench.

Claim 10 (original): The method according to claim 8, wherein said interlayer insulating film is made of a low-dielectric-constant material.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The method according to claim 7, wherein said step of forming a second trench comprises removing said insulating film by using an etchant capable of removing said insulating film selectively with respect to said metal film without using a mask.

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